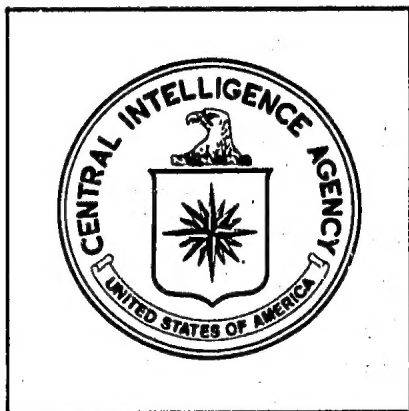


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Dutch May Lack Support for Defense Cuts

The Dutch parliament will turn down the government's proposed defense budget cuts later this month, according to a key government expert.

A press story citing retired General Van Elsen, chairman of the parliamentary defense committee and a defense spokesman for the coalition's Catholic People's Party, said that at least two of the five coalition partners will oppose the Labor Party's proposed cut backs as well as several opposition parties. Only if the Labor Party decided to make the issue a question affecting government survival are some of the parties likely to change their positions against the proposed cuts.

Opponents feel the government's program would affect the Dutch NATO commitment. Van Elsen said that the Neptune anti-submarine aircraft squadron, which the Labor Party proposed to take out of service, was vital. He assured US Embassy officials that his party and the Anti-Revolutionary Party--the second and third largest parties in the coalition--would accept his judgements.

As an alternative, Van Elsen has unveiled a proposal that involves reductions in other service areas, such as training facilities, that would not affect NATO commitments. The US defense attache recently reported that the Dutch base commander at the Hilversum training center claimed that a feasibility study is being made on closing that facility. The attache thought the move might be a trade-off to keep the Neptune squadron in service.

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Base Opponents Re-emerge

Opponents of the US-manned NATO base at Keflavik are stirring again for the first time in over a year.

Some fifty fairly prominent leftists--including educators, labor leaders, and politicians--are sponsoring a seminar on the theme of the "occupation" of Iceland on October 11-12.

With parliament reconvening next Friday, and CINCLANT Admiral Kidd also visiting on October 12-14, supporters frankly admit that it is an opportune moment to resume the anti-base movement. They hope to demonstrate that the formation last year of the government coalition pledged to retain the base does not imply that domestic opposition no longer exists. To generate enthusiasm for the campaign, the Communist-led press has begun to focus on anti-base themes.

A successful revival of this issue could drag the US into the next round of fisheries negotiations between Reykjavik and several of its European NATO partners. In the last go-around, Icelandic leaders argued that continued membership in the Alliance depended upon a successful negotiation of fishing agreements, and leaders of the present coalition may again welcome a US involvement. They are under domestic pressure to grant few, if any, fishing concessions, and warned US Ambassador Irving recently the issue might again become intertwined with the question of continued operation of the NATO base.

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Leftist Influence Gaining in Italian Press

Leftist influence appears to be on the increase in the Italian press--a trend that will probably help enhance the respectability of the Communist Party.

The phenomenon is most noticeable in some of the country's major newspapers, where leftist oriented employee organizations and, to a lesser extent, the Communist-dominated printers' union are able to condition the political views expressed by the papers. The management of nearly all newspapers must now bargain with Journalists Committees--professional employee organizations--not only on wages and working conditions but also on editorial policy. In practice, the growing influence of the committees means that many newspaper owners can no longer control what they print or even who their editor will be.

The problems that have plagued Rome's largest daily, Il Messagero, are typical of what is happening. A few years ago, Messagero's Journalists' Committee threatened a walkout when the owner tried to install conservative pundit Luigi Barzini as editor. In frustration, the owner sold the paper to a state-owned chemical firm, but the editor chosen by the firm was ultimately forced to resign because of conflicts with the Journalists' Committee. Things have been calm at Messagero since June, however, when the committee's choice--a left-wing Socialist--was made editor-in-chief.

The case of Milan's Corriere della Sera is potentially more serious. With Italy's largest circulation and a middle-of-the-road orientation,

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Corriere was for years regarded as the national journal of record. Lately, however, Corriere has been at the center of a debate over whether it has become an apologist for the Communist Party.

Some of the developments that triggered the debate include:

- the resignation of Corriere's chief foreign affairs editor last spring. He claimed that either the Journalists' Committee or the printers' union had changed his headline on a story critical of events in Portugal and that Corriere's editor-in-chief had failed to back him in the dispute.
- Corriere's coverage of the Italian Communists has taken on a sympathetic tone and, at times, has appeared to resort to deliberate distortion to bolster the Communist claim to independence from Moscow.
- Rumors that the Communists have advanced Corriere about \$1.5 million to help ease the papers financial problems.

All of this led an intimate of Corriere's chief financial backer to lament recently that the paper is "in the hands of the Communists." That may be an exaggeration, but it seems likely that the Communists can count on a minimum of criticism from the country's leading newspaper as they seek to consolidate the sharp gains scored in nationwide local elections last summer.

Some attempts are being made to restore balance to Italian journalism. Corriere's leading stockholder is bankrolling a group of prestigious journalists who split from the paper last year to start their own centrist daily, Il Giornale Nuovo. Giornale is doing well and may be joined soon by Repubblica, a daily that Milan's top publishing house plans to launch early next year. By starting

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from scratch, Republica may be able to get around some of the trade union rules that have gradually tied editorial hands at the older papers. They are also taking steps to ensure that the editor-in-chief will have full power to hire, fire, and edit.

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UNRWA Budget Crisis Pushes Agency to
the Brink

After years of crying wolf, the UN Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) finally appears close to suspending its activities completely on October 31. The Agency faces a \$13 million deficit and the prospects are not good for additional contributions, either from traditional sources--such as the US and the EC countries--or from new donors, primarily certain Arab states. The UN General Assembly may be forced to assume the responsibility for financing UNRWA's budget in order to head off the potentially explosive situation that termination of its services would produce.

Until last year's General Assembly, all UNRWA activities were entirely funded by voluntary contributions. The Arab states last year reversed their traditional opposition to UNRWA funding and proposed that portions of its 1975 budget be incorporated into the regular UN budget. As a result, the Assembly agreed to pay the salaries of the Agency's international staff from the regular UN budget, at least until UNRWA's mandate expires in June 1978.

The Assembly's political committee is not scheduled to begin its annual review of UNRWA until the end of October. The immediacy of UNRWA's need for funds, however, may stimulate an earlier and possibly acrimonious debate between opponents and proponents of an expanded UN Budget.

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